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ABSTRACT

A framework, borrowed from systems theory, is set up to identify societal forces and changes that will affect educational leaders of the future. These are the economic system with fewer dollars and the reality of declining enrollment, the trend towards conservatism and traditionalism in programming, the deluge of information from which leaders must make decisions, and the cultural plurality that society itself has recognized. Major leader behaviors that will result from these changes are mainly changes of emphasis. There will be a greater need for business and finance skills such as forecasting, cost analysis, and cost-effectiveness. Greater accountability will be required of more individuals, students, teachers, and leaders, and there will be more evaluation, for example, of performance and programs. Also since there is presently much greater cultural diversity accepted in society, there will be a need to deal with sets of values that leaders have not always considered in the past. Furthermore, skills of information processing such as interrogation and analysis will require greater attention. Finally, the ability to say "no" and stick to it will become increasingly important. (Author/MLF)

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LEADERSHIP SKILLS OF THE FUTURE

by

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LEADERSHIP SKILLS OF THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

The Question Being Raised

When one raises the question, "What are the leadership skills of the future going to be?", there is often an almost automatic reaction that they will be no different from what was required in the past. While there is no doubt some truth to the belief that the successful leader of the future will require certain highly valued leadership characteristics of the past, it appears equally valid that, as society changes, it makes different demands upon its leaders. Therefore, while many of the leadership skills which will be sought have been around for a while, there will be a greater need for some than others. "Which will be the leadership skills of leaders in education which will become increasingly important in the future?" is the main focus of this article.

Approach to the Study of the Question

In order to hypothesize and attempt to anticipate and predict what the key skills of the future for leaders in education will be, we have borrowed from "systems theory". Most simply stated, the theory suggests that change in the large system, for example a country, has an impact upon

the smaller system, such as a province. We have extended that idea to suggest that, if this is true, then the major actors of the smaller systems will have to cope differently with new pressures which will require different behaviours.

SYSTEM CHANGE(S)	SUB-SYSTEM CHANGE(S)	LEADER BEHAVIOUR CHANGE(S)
1. →	→	→
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Figure 1

Following is a concrete example to indicate more clearly and precisely what is being suggested. Let us consider a school board as a large system which has jurisdiction, for educational matters, over a certain number of square miles. Within that large system, there are a number of schools. The schools, as we are using the definition in this particular thesis, are the sub-systems of that larger system which are affected by changes in the supra-system.

Key Definitions

Below are key definitions which will assist the reader in understanding more easily the ideas which are being proposed herein.

The "system" to which reference is made frequently is North American society. The "sub-systems" which are discussed are the educational systems in this society, for example school boards, community colleges, universities, with special emphasis on Ontario institutions.

The "leader" or "leaders" involved in this discussion are primarily the Chief Executive Officers or their immediate advisors. However, a number of people might qualify for the definition of Chief Executive Officer: in reality, it is anyone who is responsible for a discreet administrative unit such as a college, a university, a school system, a family of schools, a school, or, if there is a department within a school, college or university, that particular department.

With regard to "leader behaviours", it should be noted that there is a concentration on behaviours which are seen as some of the key ones, but not necessarily the only ones which will be required of successful leaders of the future.

Recapitulation and Restatement of the Problem

To recapitulate: first, we shall identify a small number of Canadian societal changes which may have emanated from a shift in North American or world policies, ones which might also be present in Ontario;

second, we shall attempt to show how such changes have influenced education, especially education in Ontario; third and finally, we shall point out what leadership behaviour(s) is/are required to cope with these particular new pressures.

DISCUSSION

Economic Constraint

The first large system change, probably a world change, certainly a North American and a Canadian one, is the economic condition of this country as well as of this province. While we believe that we in Ontario, at least for the most part, are quite well off, we cannot deny that a lot of people say and believe, certainly compared to earlier times, that there is a real shortage of wealth. There is in fact higher unemployment than the amount to which we have become accustomed. Likewise, inflation is considerably higher than what we have usually experienced. Further, there is much talk about "the depression". What is the impact of this situation, this change in the larger system, on the sub-system, education?

As a result of the "economic depression", there is little doubt that there are "fewer dollars" available for education. There is considerable effort being undertaken by a number of groups to contain costs. For example, a few years ago, the Ministry of Education imposed ceilings upon expenditures for education. While the grants to school systems for the provision of education continue to rise in actual dollars, the percentage contribution of the Province of Ontario has decreased in recent years. Many

people predict that this decrease will continue, and in fact, must continue. Other institutions such as the Federal Government have developed measures which attempt to control costs (the anti-inflation guidelines). School boards, colleges and universities have also undertaken positive steps to control rising educational costs.

What leader behaviours or changes in behaviour are required in order to cope with this new pressure, "fewer dollars for education"? It seems evident that a greater knowledge of and appreciation for the business and finance aspects of education will be required. Skills such as forecasting (determining the long-range costs of projected programs), cost analysis (identifying the cost of various aspects of programs), cost effectiveness (analyzing cost versus returns) will be used more and more frequently, and will become prized skills which will require additional development and honing as we learn from our past experiences.

Conservatism

A second major system change of significant magnitude appears to be a pronounced return to "conservatism" in our society. This "conservative" philosophy and approach seem to be gaining the upper hand in numerous segments of our society. Consider, if you will, the key platform planks which have been considered as the major reasons why certain political parties and/or groups have been elected to power during the last year or two. There is, in fact, a cry for "a return to the basics", to a simpler, less complex way of life. Examine as well the discussions of the trustees of school boards and members of boards of governors of colleges and universities and a similar message reappears.

It seems quite natural that, in a period of rapid change where there is a disorientation on the part of society, people want to return to more simplistic ways of living and thinking. Until very recently, we have had a pioneer mentality which has been oriented towards growth and expansion. We have seldom had to look back. We were expected to build; we did. Now, no doubt more than ever before, we have begun to question that way of life. Is such growth really needed? Why? Why not? Where will it lead us? Do we need as much as we have? And so, the "pioneer mentality" is under attack. While the idea that "bigger is better" has animated our life until recently, the concept is now receiving serious thought and study; growth itself, at the rate at which it had been undertaken, is being questioned and is under much stricter control than has probably ever been exercised in the past. Now, maybe we have to consider how much merit there is in the idea that "small is beautiful". This discussion is already well underway in society at large.

Within a number of educational institutions, we see a nostalgia for the past reflected in the traditionalism which is gaining momentum. Parents want to return to the basics, perhaps without questioning what new basics might be necessary to permit our students to survive in a society that is changing as rapidly as the one that we live in now. So increasingly, we hear statements like "cut out the frills" and consequently, certain more esoteric programs such as art and music are sacrificed on the "alter of retrenchment". With increasing frequency, educational institutions, at all levels of endeavour, are being told to "stick to the basics", a statement which is becoming synonymous with "teach those skills and that subject matter which will enhance the pupils' opportunity for finding employment".

Related to this "return to the basics" is an even greater emphasis upon accountability for everyone, particularly the leaders, as well as renewed vigorous demands for more evaluation of students, and a return to more rigid and absolute standards of achievement in the schools. The pressure is there and it cannot be ignored. How then will the leader adapt himself to these sociological changes that have occurred and continue to develop in our culture?

No doubt, there will be a greater demand and need for the evaluation of students, personnel and programs. It would appear that this will have to be in relationship to a conceptual model which has been "negotiated with society" and which will reflect as accurately as possible the value system of the people, including those individuals who have been given the responsibility of governing. In the process then, the leader will have to be an advocate for his particular organization and rearticulate the organization's mandate with a view to ensuring that the system undertakes only the task(s) which it is intended to perform and, in so doing, reflects the views of the people who both ensure its existence and who govern it. A basic question that will continue to be asked and debated will be, "What is it the school does that no other segment of society does as well?". Once that question is answered, that is, a sense of direction has been given, then the leader must set himself to the task of developing a conceptual model which will ensure not only quality educational programs of a certain purpose and scope but programs which will ensure a greater congruency between what ought to be and what is.

Communications

A third area of pressure and influence, as far as a large societal change is concerned, is the area of communications or information

dissemination and retrieval. Information regarding most issues is being generated at a lightning rate of speed and it is coming from at least two prime sources: one, improvements in technology including the greater availability of more popular forms of media (There are more radios, televisions and computers being used by larger numbers of people, with greater frequency, to generate and receive information); and, two, an emphasis on and increase in human interaction, discussion and dialogue. It must be stressed that not necessarily all of the information received is crucial or important in terms of bringing additional insight into problems that are being studied and discussed; however, it cannot be denied that the information is there. Whether or not it contributes to the solution is not the issue. The point being made is twofold: there is much information available today, more than ever before, and everyone is exposed to that greater load. What are some of the influences of this phenomenon on education?

Most personnel involved in education are being submerged with information. Take an example such as The Commission on Declining Enrolment (CODE). Several volumes of data were produced which dealt with this important question. There is little doubt that these documents contained useful information. However, how does one deal with this amount of data? Take another example, the "ERIC" and "EISO" information systems. At little more than the flick of a switch, one can generate a question or a series a questions and have computer searches conducted, with a subsequent bombardment of potentially important facts, opinions and the like. Again, the question is, "How does one cope with that mass of information?". Another example of a program where there has been a great deal of discussion and where there is a great deal of information available is the French as a second language movement. When should it be taught? At what age? What are the instructional

models that might be used? What does the research say about it, not only in Canada but abroad? Some of you who have had an opportunity to study this educational undertaking will recognize that there is even more information available here than there is on declining enrolment.

One example where a great deal of discussion and dialogue occurred in an attempt to resolve a problem is the Ottawa/Carleton School Facilities Task Force. A group of individuals attempted to study the more effective potential utilization of space between two school systems. Before that issue came to any sort of closure (and to no solution), more than 100 meetings had taken place. This task force is but one other example of this mass of information with which we in society are faced, whether we be in education or elsewhere.

What are the leadership behaviour and changes that are necessitated by this colossal increase in the amount of information that is available both through improved technology and through greater human interaction? No doubt the ability to glean essential information from a variety of sources to arrive at a solution to a particular problem will gain additional importance. An ability to interrogate, analyze, synthesize, evaluate and communicate with greater efficiency will become increasingly valuable. The wise and efficient use of one's time, as well as additional skill in delegation, will also become particularly crucial. Of course, it is recognized that those skills have always been of great importance to anyone in any type of leadership position. However, the point being made here is that, although we might have been "good amateurs" in the past, or even rather "impressive professionals", we shall have to raise that standard and become particularly effective professionals,

perhaps even superstars, in dealing with this new influence and demand.

Cultural Pluralism

The fourth area of societal influence which requires some attention is the differences which exist in our society dealing with religious, ethnic and political forces. Most people would acknowledge that there has been an increasing willingness to accept a wider and greater range of differences in our society. Certain ethnic, religious and political forces that were not accepted openly or perhaps even heard satisfactorily in the past are now being recognized, and if they are not being recognized sufficiently, various groups are taking upon themselves the responsibility of communicating aggressively their concerns.

This acceptance of greater diversity as well as greater aggressiveness on the part of a host of varied groups has had an impact on educational systems. In education, more differences are not only being identified but accepted. For example, in Ontario there are a number of programs which are proof of this particular statement: the Heritage Language Program is a government initiative to encourage the maintenance and development of one's first culture; the People of Native Ancestry Program which encourages learning about and appreciating the greatness of our native people is another example of a government initiative which is designed to foster a greater acceptance of cultural diversity. Likewise, Ontario's Multiculturalism Program encourages the maintenance and development of Canada's rich and diversified multicultural heritage. The basic policy statement of the Ministry of Education in The Formative Years document makes the point time and time again that it is becoming increasingly

important for Canada, as a nation in search of a more precise identity, to recognize, understand and accept the various differences which exist among its people and to realize that we can be strong as a nation while maintaining these differences.

What are the leader behaviours or changes which will be necessitated by those particular types of pressures and influences, in this case, acceptance and promotion of Canada's cultural diversity?

There is little doubt in our minds that leaders will have to deal with a wider range of groups that wield considerable power. The members of these groups will often possess different sets of values than did organizations of the past. There will be a need for greater tolerance of differences in the system, differences which had not always required recognition before. Negotiation skills such as mediation, conciliation among and/or between different parties seeking possibly greater acceptance and recognition will be exercised regularly. Conflict management with a set of almost completely new actors will become more frequent. New coalitions will be formed. Again, it must be stressed that a number of those skills have been and are still being utilized and practiced by educational leaders; however, the point is that those skills will have to be of the greatest quality in order to respond even more meaningfully and fairly to all groups who are present and seek greater understanding for the people they represent in our pluralistic Canadian society.

Enrolment Trends

Another point which requires discussion, a phenomenon of the 70's especially, is the decrease in some areas and moderate growth in others,

of the population in North America and particularly Canada. As couples acknowledge the option of whether or not to raise a family, we have seen family size decline. In Ontario, in the early 60's, the average family size was 3.9; it is now 1.8. The projections for the future indicate that it will continue to decrease; a 1.5 family size is on the horizon. With the rate of births decreasing at a significant pace, the impact upon school systems will be considerable. Jackson of CODE has identified some of the potential problems.

With a decreasing student population, with the exception of the Community Colleges in Ontario, the province is faced with a shrinking system. Generally speaking, there are fewer students in universities. Already, certain programs, especially in high schools and universities, have been reduced or removed. This program reduction and removal may require the teacher to be more flexible in adapting to disciplines other than the one for which that person had been prepared initially. CODE documents identify others of significant importance.

What are the behaviour changes that will be necessary for the leader of the future as he attempts to deal with a declining enrolment situation which appears to be with us to stay? How will he cope with the demands of going back to the basics with the proviso that there be not only high quality basic programs but enough of them in sufficient degree so that the pupils he serves have as great an opportunity as possible to find employment?

There is no doubt that the leader will need greater and improved political skills. He has had these skills in the past but they will be in a new context as he attempts to map out the areas where education cannot

compromise and where it should travel. He will need skills of bargaining, particularly with parents and teachers, since we are dealing with the problem of fewer dollars as well as rising costs, a shrinking school population producing fewer taxes. Parents and young adult students will want more assurance that educational programs will provide the necessities of life, even if the costs for such an objective are greater. On the other hand, teachers, already somewhat annoyed at what some people believe to be excessive criticism of the institution of education, quite nervous about the possibility of losing jobs and wishing to retain the salary gains of the last decade, will continue to insist on increases in salaries which will maintain, at least, the status quo with the cost of living. New bargaining skills of a high order will be necessary for the educational leader to ensure that the system can survive intact without compromising unduly the quality of the program for the students. Certainly, the leader will have to say "no" more often than he has had to do so in the past. It will no doubt be increasingly important in the future for the leader to say "no" and hold to it. He will have to have convincing reasons to support his decision for a greater number of groups than he has ever had before.

SYNOPSIS

SYSTEM CHANGE(S)	SUB-SYSTEM CHANGE(S)	LEADER BEHAVIOUR CHANGE(S)
1. The economic condition is depressed. Compared to earlier times, there is a real shortage of wealth. * Higher unemployment * Higher inflation * Much talk about the "depression"	At least partly as a result of the "economic depression", there are "fewer dollars available for education"; there is a mammoth effort being undertaken by a number of groups to contain costs. * Ceilings * Grants: While the grants to school systems for the provision of education continue to rise steadily, the percentage contribution of the Province of Ontario has decreased in recent years.	A greater knowledge of and appreciation for the business and finance aspects of education will be required: * Forecasting - determining long range costs of projected programs * Cost analysis - identifying costs * Cost effectiveness - analyzing cost versus returns
2. At the present time in our society, conservatism appears to have the upper hand: a "pioneer mentality" oriented towards growth and more growth is being challenged. * "Bigger is better" is being questioned * Growth is being questioned and controlled	In Education, at the present time, traditionalism is gaining momentum. * Back to the basics movement * "Cut-out the frills" movement * More evaluation of students, personnel and programs is being sought.	Greater skills in student, personnel and program evaluation in relationship to a conceptual model which reflects accurately the value system of those governing the organization will gain in importance. There will be a greater need to rearticulate the organization's mandate with a view to ensuring that the system is undertaking only the tasks it is designed to perform. * Evaluating differences between what is and what ought to be in student, personnel and program output.

SYSTEM CHANGE(S)	SUB-SYSTEM CHANGE(S)	LEADER BEHAVIOUR CHANGE(S)
3. Information regarding most issues is being generated at a rapid rate and is coming from two prime sources: I. Improvements in technology and greater availability of more popular forms of media; * More radios * More televisions * The computer is being used by more people more frequently to generate and receive information II. More human interaction, discussion and dialogue.	Most personnel involved in education are being submerged with information. * CODE * French as a second language * ERIC * EISO * Task forces (Ottawa/Carleton School Facilities Task Force) generated more than 100 meetings and there is no solution as yet	Abilities to glean essential information from a variety of sources will gain additional importance; an ability to interrogate, analyse, synthesize, evaluate and communicate with greater efficiency will become increasingly valuable. The wise and efficient use of one's time as well as additional skill in delegation will become particularly crucial.
4. There has been an increasing willingness to accept a wider and greater range of differences in our society, in general. * Religious * Ethnic * Political	Likewise, in education, more differences are not only being identified but accepted. In Ontario, there are the following programs which are proof of the above statement: 1) Heritage Language Programs 2) PONA 3) Multiculturalism	Administrators will have to deal with a wider range of groups who can wield considerable power - groups whose members often possess different sets of values than did former groups. There will be a need for greater tolerance of differences in the system. Negotiation skills such as mediation, conciliation, confrontation among and/or between deffering groups will be exercised regularly. Conflict management with a set of almost totally new actors will become much more frequent. New coalitions will be formed.

SYSTEM CHANGE(S)	SUB-SYSTEM CHANGE(S)	LEADER BEHAVIOUR CHANGE(S)
5. There is a decrease in some areas, moderate growth in others, of the population of North America and particularly Canada. Family size is declining.	In education, in Canada, and more specifically in Ontario, there has been a general decline in enrolment; there are fewer students than there were - at almost all levels with the exception of community colleges in Ontario. Certain programs, particularly in high schools and universities, are being reduced or removed.	The political, bargaining and business and finance skills to which reference has already been made will be required to deal with this phenomenon. An ability to say "no" more frequently and to be able to hold to the "no" position will be a skill in great demand as the system decelerates.

Figure 2

CONCLUSIONS

Five societal forces of significant magnitude and influence, pressures in society which impact upon its various institutions, have been identified: the economic system with fewer dollars and the reality of declining enrolment, the trend towards conservatism and traditionalism in programming as opposed to the dramatic expansion of programs in the late 1960's, the deluge of information from which the leader must make decisions, and the cultural plurality which society itself has recognized. As well, some major leader behaviours which will result from these changes have been noted. We have now achieved our first objective: to set up a framework through which we might be able to identify societal forces and changes which will affect educational leaders of the future.

Of course, and perhaps needless to say, there are a number of more complex models which have been and continue to be utilized to predict the future; our own model is simplistic but it does provide a set of lenses through which people can attempt to anticipate the world of the future.

The realization of our second objective is your responsibility since it reads: to promote the discussion of "Leadership Skills of the Future".

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